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ABSTRACT

Assessing the demand for journalists educated and trained in graphics and photography, a study surveyed 172 editors and managing editors of newspapers ranging in circulation from less than 5,000 to more than 50,000. Surveys were administered to a stratified random sample of 420 newspaper editors in July 1986, with a 41% overall response rate. Questions addressed four areas: (1) visual journalism skills and understandings which editors need to perform well in their current staff positions; (2) visual journalism knowledge currently expected of entry-level journalists; (3) importance of visual journalism knowledge and skills for editors to enhance their careers; and (4) development of a working definition of visual journalism. Findings indicated that editors were largely responsible for the visual appearances of their newspapers. Also, entry-level journalists were expected to have some knowledge of graphics and photo editing principles, and editors agreed that having an understanding of and actual skills in graphics and photography were more important for career advancement than for getting a job in the first place. (Six tables of data are included, and copies of the survey cover letter, the visual journalism survey, a chart of the circulation of United States dailies, the "Graphics '83" brochure, and 19 footnotes are appended.) (MM)

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INQUIRY INTO THE DEMAND FOR VISUAL JOURNALISM SKILLS

A Newspaper Survey Report

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INQUIRY INTO THE DEMAND FOR VISUAL JOURNALISM SKILLS

Abstract

The demand for journalists educated and trained in graphics and photography is assessed in this study.

The sample population consists of 172 newspaper editors. The study examines four areas: (1) The visual journalism skills and understandings which editors must have to perform in their current staff positions; (2) Visual journalism knowledge currently expected of entry-level journalists who are applying for positions at newspapers; (3) Importance of the visual journalism knowledge and skills for editors to enhance their careers; (4) Development of a working definition of "visual journalism."

Findings of this study indicate that editors are greatly responsible for the visual appearances of their newspapers. Editors of papers from all circulation sizes are required to understand photography and graphics. Entry-level journalists are expected to have some knowledge of graphics and photo editing principles. The responding editors agree that having understandings and actual skills in graphics and photography are more important for career advancement than for getting a job to begin with.

A consensus of the respondents define "visual journalism" as communication with effective layout and use of photographs, illustrations, graphs, charts, maps and typography, all used in combination with words to produce the most informative presentation for the reader.

INQUIRY INTO THE DEMAND FOR VISUAL JOURNALISM SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper executives across the United States are becoming increasingly concerned about the appearances of their publications. Television, the success of USA Today and pressure from other competitors are among factors cited as causes of this concern.

Studies show that younger readers tend not to read newspapers as regularly as previous generations. Simmons Market Research Bureau's 1984 report says that 73 percent of the people in two statistical categories - both 45 to 54 years old and 55 to 64 years old - read newspapers regularly. In comparison, the same report says 58 percent of people 18 to 24 years old and 59 percent of people 25 to 34 years old are regular readers of newspapers.[1]

Some observors suggest the so-called television generation has turned away from newspapers because they are not as visually attractive and entertaining in style and content as the sight, sound, color and motion of television.[2]

Theodore E. Conover in Graphic Communications Today cites a study by John C. Schweitzer which reports that many people only glance at the newspaper and that the great majority of American newspaper readers spend less than 30 minutes a day with their newspapers.[3]

A natural marketing response would be to publish a newspaper specifically designed for upwardly mobile baby boomers who appear to spend little time reading.

USA Today has been designed for the audience brought up on color television. Al Neuharth, father of USA Today, says, "We simply stole the best ideas and concepts from television, from magazines and newspapers."[4]

USA Today uses about 2.5 illustrations per page, more than the New York Times, which has 1.1 per page.[5]

Many newspapers around the country appear to be emulating the USA Today approach. Tom McNichol and Margaret Carlson in a Columbia Journalism Review article noted, "Splashes of color, graphics, charts, and a move toward short, easily digestable news nuggets are some of the ideas which a growing number of local papers are borrowing."[6]

John Hartman concluded in another study that, "USA Today's approach represents the best known hope in the newspaper industry for reversing the decline in young-adult readers, and the best known way for rival editors to protect against encroachment by USA Today."[7]

However, David Gray, Graphics Editor of The Providence Journal-Bulletin, in a 1983 letter said, "Newspapers are generally the last to innovate and change. The rate of change in newspapers vis-a-vis design has accelerated in the past five years."[8]

If Hartman is right this influence may demand that journalists become more visually literate. Tim Innes, San Francisco Examiner picture editor, said in a 1983 article, "Our philosophy is to expose word people to the latest thinking in graphics, typography, photography, to help them think in visual terms."[9]

However, Bill Ostendorf observed in a 1986 DESIGN article that many editors are ill-prepared to make visual judgments.[10]

A 1985 survey prepared for the Society of Newspaper Design tried to determine who has the responsibility for making visual judgments at newspapers. In the report, "Understanding changes in the growth and shape of newspaper art departments," Nancy Tobin said, "It is not the members of the Art Department who design the the breaking news pages. Surprisingly, and in spite of so much emphasis on better-looking newspapers, only one-third have a layout or design specialist assigned to the news make-up desk."[11] In other words those tasks are being performed by editorial people.

Tobin also reported the survey results indicated that at nearly three-quarters of the newspapers responding the accuracy of newspaper graphics is checked by reporters or editors, and that reporters have the responsibility in one-third of the cases.[12]

In his book Conover predicted that journalists will be required to equip themselves with not only information gathering, writing and editing abilities but also the ability to present

messages effectively as well. "The communicator of today and the future will, with the aid of complex electronic gear, become a compositor, a layout artist and a make-up person," Conover said.[13]

If Ostendorf and Conover are even partially correct in their observations there may be important ramifications for journalists who are preparing to enter the job market for the first time, for the editors who will hire them and for the educators who will help prepare these new hires. For example, in a special report the editors of DESIGN magazine said, "The emergence of newspaper design and its developing role in the newsroom is no secret. As its importance grows, it has become obvious there is a shortage of entry-level visual journalists. They are few and far between, and they move around quickly because of the competition for their talents."[14]

When asked about educating students in newspaper design Dave Richter, assistant professor of journalism, Ohio State University, said, "I don't think most J-schools are doing enough to teach newspaper design and graphics in general. The concentration tends to be strictly word-oriented, with only a passing nod at graphics."[15]

On the other hand, Daryl Moen, chairman of the editorial department at the University of Missouri, said, "Our program is designed to train journalists - not just people who can lay out pages or take pictures. We train people who know the entire

process, who know how to edit stories, report and know that we are in the business of communicating with people."16

What is it, if anything, that editors want newly hired journalists to know about producing newspapers which have the visual appeal apparently needed to be successful in today's market? Do reporters and editors need to know anything about photography or design and layout of pages? And what about computer literacy? Editorial computer systems are now a fact of life, and many new journalists come into the business with word processing experience, but do people who want to be writers and editors really need to know anything about graphics computers or page design systems?

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to help assess the need for journalists educated and trained in graphics and photography. In addition, the study is to gather preliminary information needed for making primary decisions about a curriculum in visual journalism.

It is important to note here that this study is intended to gather information about word journalists, reporters and editors, but not artists, photographers, graphics editors, and others in similar positions.

This study is designed to collect data needed for six major objectives. They are:

1. To determine current needs for journalists who understand graphics and photography principles.
2. To determine current needs for journalists trained in graphics and photography skills.
3. To determine the extent to which journalism careers might be enhanced if journalists understand the principles of photography and graphics.
4. To determine the extent to which careers might be enhanced if journalists possess photographic and graphic skills.
5. To determine the extent to which the term "visual journalism" is used.
6. To develop a working definition of "visual journalism."

METHOD

To collect the information desired a questionnaire was administered to a stratified random sample of 420 newspaper editors. The first mailing was in July 1986, with a September followup reminder to those who had not responded. (See Exhibits A & B)

The questionnaire was sent to editors and managing editors of newspapers ranging in circulation from "less than 5,000" to "more than 50,000." If there was a managing editor listed in the Editor & .ublisher International Yearbook the questionnaire was sent to that person; otherwise, the mailing went to the editor. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Newspapers by Circulation Groups

Circulation	*Number of Daily Papers	Questionnaire Sent Out	Respondents	Response Rate
More than 50,000	253	63	59	94%
25,001 to 50,000	270	67	33	49%
10,001 to 25,000	513	128	29	23%
5,000 to 10,000	423	105	33	31%
Less than 5,000	229	57	18	32%
Total	1,688	420	172	41%

* Source: 1985 Editor & Publisher International Year Book

It is important to note that we did not survey graphics or photo editors. We did not want responses from people who by definition were specialists in aspects of newspaper design.

The stratified random sample was divided into five circulation categories based upon the 1985 Editor & Publisher International Yearbook. Populations in circulation categories above 50,000 are quite small according to this publication. Therefore, we combined the four categories above 50,000 into one. (See Exhibit C)

The questionnaire was designed to collect data which detail the visual journalism skills and understandings which responding editors perform in their current staff positions, and data which indicate what visual journalism knowledge is currently expected of entry-level journalists applying for positions at newspapers. The questionnaire also was intended to collect information about how important the editors thought a knowledge of visual journalism skills might be to career enhancement.

In addition, an attempt was made to determine the familiarity editors have with the term "visual journalism" and the number of editors who actually use the term. Respondents were also asked to define "visual journalism" in their own words. To facilitate gathering the data the instrument was divided into four major sections. (See Exhibit B)

Computer-assisted statistical analyses were made of the data.

To measure editors' responses toward the subjects a 1 to 5 Likert Scale was used. The five degrees of demand on the scale were assigned values of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, with the larger numbers representing the higher degrees of demand. (See Exhibit B)

A mean score was calculated for each item and each sample category. To give a more accurate picture of the distribution of responses, standard deviations were calculated for each item on the questionnaire. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each item by circulation categories and for total number of responses for each item. (See Tables 2,3,4)

Additional statistical treatments were given to the data assembled. Some analyses of variance were done to obtain F ratio information and a t-test was performed on the mean scores for each questionnaire item in three sections of the instrument. Statistical significance levels were established with .05 as "significant" and .01 as "highly significant."

In an effort to get a picture of the overall population confidence intervals were calculated for each questionnaire item.

RESULTS

Of the 420 questionnaires sent there was a return of 172 for an overall response rate of 41 percent. The sample category of "less than 5,000" had a response rate of 32 percent while the category representing the largest newspapers, "more than 50,000," had a return rate of 94 percent. The lowest response rate came from newspapers in the "10,001 to 25,000" group. The return from that group was 23 percent even though this was the largest sample group with 128 questionnaires sent. (See Table 1)

As mentioned, a Likert scale of 1 to 5 was assigned to the descriptors -- the possible responses presented to the editors. The values and descriptors on the Likert scale were assigned as follows: 5 =completely, 4 = to a great extent, 3 = to some extent, 2 = to a little extent, 1 = not at all. (See Exhibit B)

Current Staff Position:

Editors agreed with little variance that in their own staff positions they were responsible "to a great extent" for the visual appearances of their newspapers. There appeared to be little variance in this agreement no matter the circulation of the newspaper. "Understanding of the principles of photography" and "a knowledge of basic layout and typography" scored means of 4.16 and 4.23, respectively, for all samples combined. These scores came with standard deviations (SD) of .76 and .78 to

Table 2

CURRENT STAFF POSITION

Circulation:	More than 50,000		25,001 to 50,000		10,001 to 25,000		5,000 to 10,000		Less than 5,000		Total		
To what extent:	N=59		N=33		N=29		N=33		N=18		N=172		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Are you responsible for the visual appearance of your publication?	3.97	.61	3.88	.55	4.03	.57	4.12	.64	3.78	.94	3.97	.64	
Does your current staff position require an understanding of the principles of photography and the use of photos?	4.14	.89	4.18	.77	4.31	.54	4.24	.61	3.89	.83	4.16	.76	
Does your current staff position require skills of taking pictures?	1.78	1.17	1.70	1.24	2.28	1.07	3.15	1.20	3.06	1.35	2.26	1.32	**
Does your current staff position require a knowledge of graphics (basic layout and typography)?	4.29	.77	4.03	.92	4.31	.71	4.33	.74	4.11	.76	4.23	.78	
Does your current staff position require an understanding of the components and capabilities of a graphic arts computer system?	3.12	1.06	2.60	1.41	2.55	1.50	2.42	1.41	2.06	1.26	2.68	1.33	*
Does your current staff position require layout and page design techniques with a graphic arts computer system?	2.07	1.23	1.61	.93	2.10	1.18	1.58	1.12	1.06	.24	1.78	1.12	**

* Significant at $p < .05$
** Significant at $p < .01$

1-5 Likert scale: 5 - Completely
4 - To a great extent
3 - To some extent
2 - To a little extent
1 - Not at all

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indicate that the vast majority of the editors are required to have these understandings and knowledge no matter the size of the newspaper.

Generally, mechanical skills of taking pictures are not required of the editors to the extent that the understanding of the principles of photography are. However, newspapers with smaller circulations appear to require their editors to take pictures more than those with large circulations.

Conversely, editors at the largest papers scored a mean of 3.12 to indicate that "to some extent" they are required to "understand the components and capabilities of a graphic arts computer system." With a SD of 1.06 there was a wider range here than in some other areas. Editors of the larger papers also indicated that when it came to actually performing "layout and page design techniques with a graphic arts computer system" they did so "to a little extent."

The lowest composite mean score, by far, for this section was in response to the above question about actually using a graphic arts computer system. The composite mean for all sample categories was 1.78 with a SD of 1.12 for this item.

In this section of the questionnaire three sets of scores proved to be statistically significant. In the case of editors having to "understand the components and capabilities of a graphic arts computer system" the mean scores have a significance

at the .05 level. The responses for this item also show a definite trend indicating a relationship between the circulation of a newspaper and the requirement that editors understand graphics computer systems.

The scores for the question regarding editors having "skills of taking pictures" appear to be quite valid and highly significant at a level of .01. Additionally, the relatively low mean of 1.78 for the requirement of "layout and page design techniques with a graphic arts computer system" is highly significant at the .01 level. (See Table 2)

Entry-level Journalists:

Editors expect entry-level journalists to understand basic principles of graphics, typography, photography and photo editing and to acquire mechanical skills of page design and taking pictures for publication "to some extent."

As Table 3 indicates there are differences between the newspapers with large circulations and those with small circulations in the extent to which newly hired journalists will be expected to understand "photography" and "photo editing." Editors from the smallest newspapers scored a mean of 3.94 to indicate that many of them expect new hires to know how to take pictures "to a great extent," while the editors from the largest newspapers scored a mean of 2.68 to indicate that entry-level journalists will be expected to know photography techniques

Table 3

ENTRY-LEVEL JOURNALISTS

To what extent do you expect entry-level journalists to equip themselves with the following?	Circulation:	More than 50,000		25,001 to 50,000		10,001 to 25,000		5,000 to 10,000		Less than 5,000		Total		
		N=59		N=33		N=29		N=33		N=18		N=172		
A. Understandings of:		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Graphics: principles of basic layout and design in the use of photos and art		3.05	.89	3.06	.97	2.82	.86	3.03	.88	3.06	.90	3.01	.90	
Production methods: information on the latest printing technology		2.29	.78	2.33	1.14	1.86	.85	2.24	.85	2.24	.97	2.21	.93	
Typography: the aesthetics and mechanics of type and the appropriate application of them		2.73	.82	2.73	1.18	2.39	.92	2.45	1.06	2.94	1.03	2.64	.99	
Color: color coordination and color reproduction		2.53	1.09	2.55	1.20	1.96	.92	2.09	.88	1.88	.99	2.29	1.06	*
Computer graphics: the components and capabilities of a graphic arts computer system		2.23	1.04	2.09	1.20	1.93	.94	1.73	.84	1.65	1.00	1.99	1.03	
Photography: principles of taking pictures for publication		2.65	1.08	3.27	1.07	3.18	.94	3.76	1.03	3.94	1.03	3.21	1.13	**
Photo editing: selection and use of photos		2.95	.95	3.09	1.16	2.64	.99	3.33	.99	3.35	.93	3.04	1.02	
B. Mechanical skills of:														
Basic layout: designing pages		3.16	1.03	3.12	1.28	2.86	1.01	3.15	1.00	2.88	1.05	3.07	1.06	
Paste-up: methods of producing accurate camera-ready paste-ups		2.02	1.08	2.00	1.17	1.79	.88	2.45	1.00	2.65	1.32	2.13	1.10	*
Art creation: creating effective visuals for editorial messages		2.47	1.20	2.41	1.24	1.93	.90	2.30	.98	2.35	1.17	2.32	1.12	
Computer graphics: operating a graphic arts computer system (page design and/or pagination with the computer)		1.86	1.01	1.76	1.12	1.46	.79	1.55	.79	1.41	.80	1.67	.95	
Photography: operating a camera and taking pictures for publication		2.28	1.15	3.00	1.17	3.43	.96	3.88	1.05	4.18	.73	3.12	1.27	**
Darkroom techniques: film processing and printing		1.93	1.08	2.06	1.30	1.79	.83	2.82	1.21	3.35	1.11	2.25	1.22	**

* Significant at $p < .05$
** Signifi-ant at $p < .01$

1-5 Likert scale:
5 - Completely
4 - To a great extent
3 - To some extent
2 - To a little extent
1 - Not at all

somewhere between "a little extent" and "some extent."

The understandings of "production methods," "color coordination and reproduction" and "computer graphics" scored means of 2.21, 2.29 and 1.99, respectively, to indicate little demand for these from entry-level journalists. The SD for each of these scores indicates some variance, however, with scores of .93, 1.06 and 1.03, respectively.

Mechanical skills of "paste-up, art creation and operating a graphics arts computer system" are demanded to a little extent no matter what sample category. "Operating a graphic arts computer" received the lowest mean score for this section dealing with entry-level journalists, and, indeed, the lowest mean score for the entire questionnaire. The mean for this item was 1.67 with a SD of .95.

Statistical significance occurred for the responses to 5 questions in the "Entry-Level Journalists" section. Those are all indicated in Table 3. Of special note here are the items dealing with photography. Items dealing with entry-level journalists' needs to understand "photography principles" and to have the skills of "operating a camera" drew responses which were highly significant statistically. Both had significance probability levels of less than .01. We can also see from these scores a definite trend which indicates that photography understandings and skills are less important for new hires at larger circulation papers than at smaller papers.

Although actually doing "darkroom techniques" had lower mean scores than the two items just mentioned, the scores for this item were also highly significant at the .01 level. (See Table 3)

Career Enhancement:

Mean scores were consistently higher for the "Career Enhancement" section of the survey than for "Current Staff Position" or "Entry-Level Journalists" sections. In the "Career Enhancement" section the composite mean scores for all sample categories were above 3.0 for all but two questions.

Editors from newspapers of all sizes believe that understanding "graphics," "photography" and "photo editing" will be helpful "to a great extent" for journalists who wish to further their careers. Understanding "graphics" had a mean score of 3.96, showing little variance with a SD of .70. Understanding "photography" had a mean response of 3.79 with a .97 SD, and understanding "photo editing" scored a mean of 3.94 and a SD of .81.

Understandings of "typography," "color" and "computer graphics" had means which were somewhat lower, but the SD for all three were greater than the above mentioned responses, indicating a greater variance. These results show that a sizable percentage of editors thought the understandings of "typography," "color" and "computer graphics" would help "to some extent" or a "to a great extent" in furthering journalists' careers.

Table 4

CAREER ENHANCEMENT

To what extent do you believe knowledge of the following would aid journalists in furthering their careers?	Circulation:	More than 50,000		25,001 to 50,000		10,001 to 25,000		5,000 to 10,000		Less than 5,000		Total		
		N=59		N=33		N=29		N=33		N=18		N=172		
A. Understandings of:		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Graphics: principles of basic layout and design in the use of photos and art		4.03	.67	3.97	.77	3.90	.67	3.97	.68	3.78	.81	3.96	.70	
Production methods: information on the latest printing technology		3.20	.91	3.30	1.07	2.62	.86	3.15	1.03	3.17	.71	3.11	.96	*
Typography: the aesthetics and mechanics of type and the appropriate application of them		3.59	.85	3.61	1.00	3.41	.95	3.36	.96	3.78	.81	3.54	.91	
Color: color coordination and color reproduction		3.61	.89	3.91	.98	3.28	.88	3.06	1.12	3.28	1.13	3.47	1.01	**
Computer graphics: the components and capabilities of a graphic arts computer system		3.53	.86	3.42	1.15	3.28	.92	3.15	1.03	3.28	1.18	3.37	1.00	
Photography: principles of taking pictures for publication		3.32	1.14	3.85	.76	3.90	.82	4.18	.81	4.28	.57	3.79	.97	**
Photo editing: selection and use of photos		3.72	.89	4.12	.74	3.93	.70	4.03	.85	4.11	.58	3.94	.81	
B. Mechanical skills of:														
Basic layout: designing pages		4.00	.75	3.97	.85	4.03	.68	4.18	.68	4.00	.91	4.04	.76	
Paste-up: methods of producing accurate camera-ready paste-ups		2.63	1.10	2.64	1.32	2.31	.93	3.27	1.15	3.44	1.10	2.79	1.18	**
Art creation: creating effective visuals for editorial messages		3.38	1.12	3.48	1.25	3.21	.86	3.39	.93	3.11	.90	3.35	1.05	
Computer graphics: operating a graphic arts computer system (page design and/or pagination with the computer)		3.22	.96	3.24	1.23	3.21	1.15	3.12	1.11	3.00	1.19	3.18	1.09	
Photography: operating a camera and taking pictures for publication		3.03	1.17	3.48	1.00	4.03	.94	4.18	.81	4.44	.51	3.66	1.11	**
Darkroom techniques: film processing and printing		2.41	1.21	2.94	1.17	2.86	1.09	3.24	1.12	4.00	1.03	2.92	1.23	**

* Significant at $p < .05$
** Significant at $p < .01$

1-5 Likert scale:
5 - Completely
4 - To a great extent
3 - To some extent
2 - To a little extent
1 - Not at all

Although the editors generally did not think that having mechanical skills was as important to career advancement as the understandings mentioned above they did score the skills of "basic layout: designing pages" high, indicating that such skills would aid career enhancement "to a great extent." The mean for all sample categories here was the highest in this section at 4.04 with a SD of .76.

Knowing the skills of "photography: operating a camera and taking pictures for publication" also scored in the realm of "to a great extent" with a composite mean for all sample categories of 3.66 and a SD of 1.11. The responses to this question showed greater differences between the means scored in the various circulation categories than those scored for "basic layout" as indicated above.

For these "photography" skills there was a progression of mean scores in the five sample categories from 3.03 in the "more than 50,000" category to 4.44 in the "less than 5,000" group. Also to be noted is the small .51 SD of the "less than 5,000" group, contrasted to the 1.17 SD of the "more than 50,000" set of responses.

Skills in "paste-up methods," "art creation," "computer graphics" and "darkroom techniques," while not scoring as highly as the prevously discussed items, all scored composite means in the "to some extent" range. In the cases of "paste-up methods" and "darkroom techniques" editors from the smaller papers considered these skills to be more helpful in career ehancement

than did their counterparts at the larger newspapers.

One of the interesting things in the results for the "Career Enhancement" section of this survey is, in addition to more mean scores above a 3.0 than the preceeding two sections, this section has more scores which are statistically significant or highly significant. There are 5 questions which have scores that are statistically highly significant. In addition, scores for three questions which dealt with photography understandings and photography skills show a very observable trend linking circulation size to the extent to which editors rate these understandings and skills important to career enhancement. With the statistical significance level at .01 for the scores for three aforementioned questions we can put trust in the observability of this trend. (See Table 4)

Definition of Visual Journalism:

Is the term "visual journalism" a new phrase created by this study? According to the survey, it is not. More than half, 57 percent, of the respondents answered that they had heard of the term while 41.3 percent said they had never encountered it. (See Table 5)

However, only 11.6 percent of the respondents actually use the term "visual journalism" in their professional work. Among them are editors of The Columbus Dispatch, New York Daily News, San Francisco Chronicle and San Jose Mercury News. (See Table 6)

Table 5

Have you ever heard of the term "Visual Journalism"?

Circulation / Response	More than 50,000	25,001 to 50,000	10,001 to 25,000	5,000 to 10,000	Less than 5,000	Total
	N=59	N=33	N=29	N=33	N=18	N=172
Yes	37 62.7%	18 54.5%	15 51.7%	20 60.6%	8 44.4%	98 57.0%
No	19 32.2%	15 45.5%	14 48.3%	13 39.4%	10 55.6%	71 41.3%
No response	3 5.1%	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 1.7%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6

Do you use the term "Visual Journalism"?

Circulation / Response	More than 50,000	25,001 to 50,000	10,001 to 25,000	5,000 to 10,000	Less than 5,000	Total
	N=59	N=33	N=29	N=33	N=18	N=172
Yes	13 22.0%	1 3.0%	2 6.9%	3 9.1%	1 5.6	20 11.6%
No	43 72.9%	32 97.0%	27 93.1%	30 90.9%	17 94.4%	149 86.6%
No response	3 5.1%	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 1.7%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Slightly more than 86 percent of the editors -- including those at The Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Rocky Mountain News, The Wall Street Journal and USA Today -- do not use the term.

John A. Hamlin, graphics editor of the Oregonian, said, "The principles of good design and color sense and the ability to 'read' and edit photos should be an integral part of the education of any journalist. Calling part of the process 'visual journalism' only serves to perpetuate the senseless rift between 'word people' and 'picture people.'"

The Wall Street Journal seems to pay little concern to "visual journalism." William E. Casey, news editor of The Wall Street Journal said, "It (The Journal) has pioneered satellite transmission of printing and has a unique makeup and front page that diminishes the need for makeup or layout innovation on a daily basis."

Neal A. Pattison, assistant managing editor of The Spokesman-Review and Spokane Chronicle, commented, "Fifteen years ago, news photographers latched onto the phrase 'photojournalists' in an attempt to gain legitimacy in the newsroom. Their message was: We are journalists, too...Only at the very best papers have they unified their approach to journalism -- when the first priority is to transmit information and the second choice is to pick the most appropriate vehicle or combination of vehicles...With the emphasis on visual appeal at

most newspapers today, there is no great struggle for legitimacy among 'visual journalists.' So, rather than creating new categories, let's just teach them (journalism students) all to be journalists."

A consensus of the respondents, disregarding whether they use the term or not, defined "visual journalism" as communication with effective layout and use of photographs, illustrations, graphs, charts, maps and typography in combination with words to produce the most informative presentations for the readers.

"The ability to communicate ideas, information, concepts and facts in ways other than the printed word," is the way Brian L. Steffens, news editor of The San Diego Union, defined the term. "Usually communication via photojournalism, informational graphics, organization and placement, almost always in conjunction with the printed word(s)."

Pamela A. Reasner, graphics editor of the Times Tribune in Palo Alto, Calif., said, "Visuals include photography, illustrations and graphic elements (type, infographics, charts, rules, logos, etc.). 'Visual journalism' would imply the practice of creating and using 'visual' elements to communicate information -- not decorate or break up type or fill holes."

Editors also agreed that visual journalism is not just one segment of their profession but the whole package. It involves not only visual elements but also placing and handling of news and feature stories.

"It's a supplement -- not a replacement -- for good writing and reporting skills," Steven Macoy, managing editor of the Palladium-Times, commented. "When used effectively, visual journalism attracts readers to a well-written story and provides additional information."

DISCUSSION

In terms of satisfying the purposes stated for this study we at least come close. We are for the most part satisfied with the return rate. The response percentages appear to imply some sort of relationship between the size of a newspaper and the return even though we have not tried to statistically link the two. Of course, the perplexing part of that consideration is the low 23 percent response from the largest sample group (circulation 10,001 to 25,000), which breaks up an otherwise progressive pattern. One interesting thing, though, is what seems to be the abnormally high 94 percent return rate from editors of the largest newspapers. We can only surmise at the reasons for the high return rate in this sample category. Perhaps editors at large newspapers just are very concerned about improving the profession. This might be an interesting area for further investigation and, at least, a good management seminar topic.

Based on strong central tendencies in certain of the response areas we do think that we can infer a current demand for newspaper journalists who are educated and trained in particular

aspects of graphics and photography.

The results well establish that editors and managing editors have not abdicated involvement in the visual appearance of their newspapers. Even with the graphics experts, photo editors and various consultants we find in newsrooms today it appears that editors are still firmly involved in dealing with photo use, typography and layout. Indeed, we can see strong evidence that editors of papers from all circulation categories, the largest to the smallest, are required to understand photography and graphics. It is also suggested that graphics and pagination computer systems have made mild inroads, but editors are not interfacing with them to any great extent.

Generally, mechanical skills are not required of editors, even those with graphics computers. Given the rapid change in technology and the inference here that understanding principles is more important to editors than possessing mechanical skills, perhaps some of the editors can afford to miss the next hands-on graphics computer workshop.

We can see that the editors do expect entry-level journalists to have some knowledge of graphics and photo editing principles. It appears true that beginning reporters on small papers often are asked to take pictures, to develop film and to print pictures.

A rather interesting dichotomy arises in that the editors seem to indicate that understanding graphics and photography and

having actual skills in these areas are more important for career advancement than for getting a job to begin with.

In the career advancement section editors appear to be saying that, to get ahead, a journalist must understand everything about putting out a visually appealing paper. And they highly rate the skills necessary to do this. Why are these things more important for experienced hands seeking advancement than they are for those beginning in the business? Could it be that editors expect to train newcomers on the job?

Although this study cannot answer all questions raised, we do think that direction is indicated for making some decisions about journalism education. First of all, we think it is apparent that any institution providing professional journalism education must know for sure where its graduates enter the profession as well as what type of positions they enter. If, in addition to providing a broad-based liberal education, we have some responsibility for providing the knowledge and skills necessary for job qualification and for career advancement, then we had better know what will be required of our charges.

We think that this relates to what Robert H. Bohle said in his Fall 1985 DESIGN article: "The time has come in the relatively young field of newspaper design for designers and educators to come together and specifically discuss the nature of design education. Besides the fundamental question of whether

designers should be educated by journalism schools at all, the following questions might be addressed:

1. Should designers be skilled word journalists first?
2. Should design students study the new technologies (computer graphics, pagination, etc.)?
3. If the answer to number 2 is yes, who will pay for expensive high-tech equipment and keep the schools up to date?
4. Should design be taught as part of editing? If taught as a separate course, what should be given up from an already crowded curriculum as specified by accrediting bodies in journalism education?
5. Should all print journalism students be given an education in visual communication?
6. Should we prepare even more specialized journalists or does the industry need more generalists?"[17]

We hope that this study provides some beginning answers to some of Bohle's questions. The results appear to give some credence to the idea that we should require that any student who wants to work in newspaper journalism become acquainted with the basic principles of graphics design and typography, graphics production, and photo production and use.

Furthermore, we think that we should continue to teach skills courses in photojournalism, graphics design and layout. Results of this study support the editors of DESIGN magazine in their idea of "encouraging more journalism schools and departments to include newspaper design courses in their curricula.[18]

We suggest going slowly in the computer graphics area, given the mixed results which show a low demand for journalists trained in this area contradicted by a greater demand for this knowledge as a requirement for career advancement. With rapidly changing and expensive technology and the inference that editors expect to train new hires on the job, we strongly suggest emphasizing principles rather than equipment.

David Gray probably said it best in his 1983 letter, "Schools should concentrate on teaching students to think, to explore, to question, to wonder and to approach old problems with new solutions. Learning about the bits and bytes can come later, because so much is changing so fast that what a school could finally wrangle from a budget would be old before it got installed. Perhaps the schools should stick to the basics of computer knowledge and leave the details to the workplace."[19]

We recommend further study in this area which will be helpful in resolving how extensive computer experience should be in journalism education.

Finally, there is the whole question of "visual journalism." While we don't want to bear responsibilty for cluttering an honorable profession with unneccessary jargon, we are aware of the growing use of the term. Although this study really did not examine the forces which brought about this usage, it appears to

us that three factors may have helped cause the proliferation of the phrase: 1.market influences mentioned in the "Introduction" of this study, 2.technological developments characterized by the arrival of computers into which one can input art elements, photographs, words and then combine them to create a package and 3.role changes exemplified by the breakdown of barriers which have separated specialties in newsrooms.

One of the best examples of the latter trend was the 1983 transition of the San Jose Mercury News "Photography In Journalism Conference" to what has been known since as "Graphics '83,'84,'85,'86,'87 .... ."

The logo chosen for the transitional year of the event and the rationale explained on the front page of the 1983 conference brochure say it well:

> "We've changed the name of the Photography in Journalism conference to Graphics '83. Why? Because we think it's time to erase some old and arbitrary distinctions. Photographers, editors, artists and writers pool their talents on a daily basis, and we want to encourage more ideas as to how to do that successfully. Our graphic presentations have become more important than ever as our audience finds itself bombarded with slick, concise and sensible packaging from sources that compete with daily newspapers for time and attention.
>
> We think Graphics '83 offers something of interest to photographers and picture editors, to news and city editors and to editorial artists and designers." (See Exhibit D)

What will happen to the term "visual journalism"? Is this simply another phenomenon caused by USA Today? We think the jury is still out, but a good guess is that we may hear more of the term. It may be jargon; it may illegitimate. But, it is indeed curious that 56 percent of our editors had heard of the term, while only 12 percent of them use the term. Perhaps a few people are doing most of the speaking.

NOTES

[1] "Publications: Total Audiences," Simmons 1983 and 1984 Studies of Media and Markets.

[2] Jack Lyle, "Immediate vs. Delayed Reward Use of Newspaper by Adolescents," Journalism Quarterly, (Winter 1962), pp. 83-85.

[3] Theodore E. Conover, Graphic Communications Today, West Publishing Company, St. Paul, MN, (1985), p. 13.

[4] Tom McNichol and Margaret Carlson, "Al Neuharth's Technicolor Baby, Part II," Columbia Journalism Review, (May/June, 1985), pp. 44-48.

[5] "Comparing USA Today's News Content," 1983 Report of the Changing Newspaper Committee.

[6] McNichol and Carlson, pp. 44-48.

7 John Hartman, "USA Today and Young Readers," Newspaper Research Journal, (Winter 1987), pp. 1-11.

8 David B. Gray, letter to Theodore E. Conover, November 26, 1983, p. 2.

9 Tim Innes, "Training professionals across disciplinary lines," DESIGN: The Journal of the Society of Newspaper Design, (No. 13, Fall 1983), p. 14.

10 Bill Ostendorf, "Designing the news," DESIGN: The Journal of The Society of Newspaper Design, (No. 20, 1986), pp. 16-17.

11 Nancy Tobin, "Understanding changes in the growth and shape of newspaper art departments," results of a survey prepared for the Society of Newspaper Design, (October 1985), p. 5.

12 Tobin, p. 4.

13 Conover, p. 12.

14 "Winners All Around," DESIGN: The Journal of The Society of Newspaper Design, (No. 24 - a special report), p. 24.

15 Ray Chattman, "Schools, papers, need to get together on training," DESIGN:The Journal of the Society of Newspaper Design, (No. 18, Winter 1985), p. 30.

16 Chattman, pp. 30-31.

17 Robert H. Bohle, "Why can't editors and educators work together?" DESIGN: The Journal of the Society of Newspaper Design, (No. 19, Fall 1985), pp. 38-39.

18 "Winners All Around," DESIGN, p. 24.

19 Gray, p. 4.

APPENDIX

Exhibit A. Cover Letter

Exhibit B. Visual Journalism Survey

Exhibit C. Circulation of U.S. Dailies

Exhibit D. Graphics '83 Brochure

Exhibit A

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA-RENO

The Donald W. Reynolds School of Journalism
and Center for Advanced Media Studies
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, Nevada 89557-0040
(702) 784-6531

July 2, 1986

Ronald D. Martin
USA Today
P.O.Box 500
Washington, DC 20044

Dear editor,

The attached survey is concerned with the need for journalists trained in visual journalism skills. The questionnaire is part of a study being done by the Donald W. Reynolds School of Journalism at University of Nevada, Reno.

The result of this study will be used in determining the need for a visual journalism sequence and for improving professional journalism education here at the Reynolds School.

Your responses are important to us because of your experience in professional journalism.

The enclosed survey has been designed with the hopes that we can obtain as much information as possible with a minimum imposition on your time. Your help will be deeply appreciated if you return the survey by July 22nd in the prepared envelope.

We would welcome your comments concerning any aspect of the subject not covered in the survey. If you desire, we will be pleased to send you a summary of the survey results.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Seong Wan Choi
Graduate Assistant

Enclosure

Exhibit B

Donald W. Reynolds School of Journalism
and Center for Advanced Media Studies
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, Nevada 89557-0040

Visual Journalism Survey

YOURSELF

(1) Your name: _____

(2) Your staff position: _____

(3) Brief description of your job: _____

_____

_____

_____

(4) How long have you been in the current position?

_____year(s), _____month(s)

YOUR PUBLICATION

(5) Your publication title or name: _____

(6) City and state of publication: _____, _____

(7) Frequency of publication: (*Please circle one.*)

(a) daily
(b) weekly
(c) monthly
(d) bi-monthly
(e) other: _____

(8) Circulation:

(a) more than 50,000
(b) 25,001 to 50,000
(c) 10,001 to 25,000
(d) 5,000 to 10,000
(e) less than 5,000

This part of the survey is divided into three categories: your current staff position, entry level journalists, and career enhancement. Please circle the best response.

I. YOUR CURRENT STAFF POSITION

To what extent: (Please circle one)

	Completely	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
(9) Are you responsible for the visual appearance of your publication?	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(10) Does your current staff position require an understanding of the principles of photography and the use of photos?	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(11) Does your current staff position require skills of taking pictures?	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(12) Does your current staff position require a knowledge of graphics (basic layout and typography)?	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(13) Does your current staff position require an understanding of the components and capabilities of a graphic arts computer system?	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(14) Does your current staff position require layout and page design techniques with a graphic arts computer system?	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

II. ENTRY LEVEL JOURNALISTS

To what extent do you expect entry level journalists to equip themselves with the following?

	Completely	To a great extent	To some extent	To a little extent	Not at all
A. Understandings of:					
(15) Graphics: principles of basic layout and design in the use of photos and art	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(16) Production methods: information on the latest printing technology	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(17) Typography: the aesthetics and mechanics of type and the appropriate application of them	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(18) Color: color coordination and color reproduction	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(19) Computer graphics: the components and capabilities of a graphic arts computer system	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(20) Photography: principles of taking pictures for publication	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(21) Photo editing: selection and use of photos	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

B. Mechanical skills of:

(22) Basic layout: designing pages	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(23) Paste-up: methods of producing accurate camera-ready paste-ups	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(24) Art creation: creating effective visuals for editorial messages	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(25) Computer graphics: operating a graphic arts computer system (page design and/or pagination with the computer)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(26) Photography: operating a camera and taking pictures for publication	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(27) Darkroom techniques: film processing and printing	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

III. CAREER ENHANCEMENT

To what extent do you believe knowledge of the following would aid journalists in furthering their careers?

	Not at all	To a little extent	To some extent	To a great extent	Completely
A. Understandings of:					
(28) Graphics: principles of basic layout and design in the use of photos and art	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(29) Production methods: information on the latest printing technology	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(30) Typography: the aesthetics and mechanics of type and the appropriate application of them	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(31) Color: color coordination and color reproduction	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(32) Computer graphics: the components and capabilities of agraphic arts computer system	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(33) Photography: principles of taking pictures for publication	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(34) Photo editing: selection and use of photos	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
B. Mechanical skills of:					
(35) Basic layout: designing pages	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(36) Paste-up: methods of producing accurate camera-ready paste-ups	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(37) Art creation: creating effective visuals for editorial messages	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(38) Computer graphics: operating a graphic arts computer system (page design and/or pagination with the computer)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(39) Photography: operating a camera and taking pictures for publication	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
(40) Darkroom techniques: film processing and printing	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)

VISUAL JOURNALISM

(41) Have you ever heard of the term "Visual Journalism"?

(a) Yes
(b) No

(42) Do you use the term "Visual Journalism"?

(a) Yes
(b) No

(43) What do you think the notion "Visual Journalism" implies? (Please give your own definition of the term.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

For your publication, what position(s) other than the production staff require:

(44) A knowledge of photography or the use of photos?

_____

_____

(45) A knowledge of graphics (layout and typography)?

_____

_____

YOUR COMMENTS

Any comments that you may have concerning any aspect of Visual Journalism not covered in this instrument:

Date ____/____/____

Exhibit C

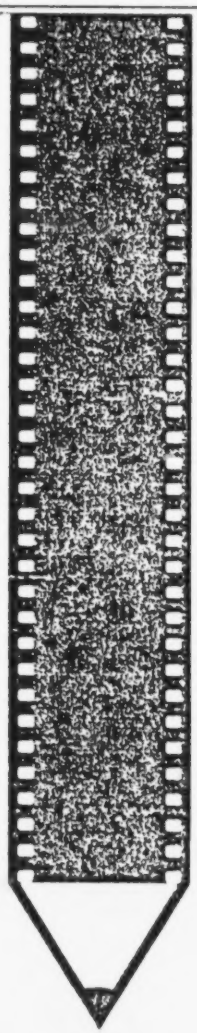
CIRCULATION OF U.S. DAILY NEWSPAPERS BY CIRCULATION GROUPS

CIRCULATION—	NUMBER OF DAILY PAPERS		
	AMs	PMs	Total
* More than 500,000	14	4	15
* 250,001 to 500,000	18	8	20
* 100,001 to 250,000	52	39	84
* 50,001 to 100,000	85	54	134
* 25,001 to 50,000	98	177	270
* 10,001 to 25,000	100	414	513
5,000 to 10,000	52	371	423
Less than 5,000	39	190	229
* Totals	458	1,257	1,688

Exhibit D

GRAPHICS '83

formerly PHOTOGRAPHY IN JOURNALISM CONFERENCE



We're pleased to announce the 5th annual San Jose Mercury News conference. We hope you'll be able to join us.

We've changed the name of the Photography in Journalism conference to **Graphics '83**. Why? Because we think it's time to erase some old and arbitrary distinctions. Photographers, editors, artists and writers pool their talents on a daily basis, and we want to encourage more ideas as to how to do that successfully. Our graphic presentations have become more important than ever as our audience finds itself bombarded with slick, concise and sensible packaging from sources that compete with daily newspapers for time and attention.

We think **Graphics '83** offers something of interest to photographers and picture editors, to news and city editors and to editorial artists and designers.

Our three-day program features seminar-style presentations and intensive how-to workshop sessions. Design and portfolio critiques from leaders in the field will offer you something more than food for thought, and the workshops allow for individual attention.

Our annual picture editing and page design competition (with the only open judging on the West Coast) has received national attention.